

# WILDERNESS TASK FORCE

REPORT ON IMPROVING WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT  
IN THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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The 1993 Wilderness Task Force

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Ranger Activities Division

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	<u>Page #</u>
<b>Executive Summary</b>	2
<b>Introduction: From Identity Crisis to Stewardship</b>	6
<b>Wilderness Management and the National Park Service</b>	9
<b>The 1993 Wilderness Task Force</b>	18
<b>Wilderness Task Force Recommendations</b>	19
Objectives for Improving Wilderness Management	19
Critical Actions and Organizational Responsibility	23
<b>Restructuring NPS Wilderness Leadership</b>	32
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	37

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Wilderness Act of 1964 significantly strengthens the protection and management of those National Park Service (NPS) areas that are designated wilderness or under study/recommendation for wilderness designation. But while the NPS administers the largest portion of the National Wilderness Preservation System, efforts to provide distinctive and consistent wilderness management have proven ineffective. Despite the conscientious devotion of many field level staff, strong leadership has not been established in Regional or Washington offices to respond to field needs or to provide for needed management consistency across the agency. There appears to be no collective understanding of the relationship between the mandates of the 1916 NPS Organic Act and the 1964 Wilderness Act and the implications this has for park management across all program areas. Training and guidance on wilderness planning and management is lacking. The importance of wilderness and its implications to management has not been separated from basic park management and adequately communicated within the organization. Many NPS wilderness studies and recommendations have languished for as long as 20 years.

In response, a NPS Wilderness Task Force, meeting in Washington, D.C. November 1-5, 1993, developed some exciting and creditable recommendations on ways the NPS can improve its management of wilderness. These recommendations recognize the need to involve many organizational disciplines, including rangers, natural and cultural resource specialists, interpreters, maintenance crews, and line officers, in wilderness management. Consistent with trends in the American work force emphasizing increased productivity without significant increases in funds or personnel, the creation of small, highly motivated work groups, and maintaining an emphasis on flexibility and training. The Task Force recommendations are also consistent with the proposed NPS restructuring plans.

The Wilderness Task Force makes recommendations on the following management elements:

### Wilderness Leadership

The NPS needs to provide strong wilderness leadership that embraces the diversity of the service and the Nation. There is also a need for and an enormous opportunity to facilitate and promote interagency cooperation to make reality the concepts of "reinventing government." This is especially valid in the areas of training, research and ecosystem management.

The Task Force recommends that the NPS:

- Establish Wilderness Steering Committees at the national, system support center, and park levels.



- Establish a formal Interagency Wilderness Coordination Council.
- Initiate a Wilderness Management Awards Program for NPS personnel.
- Maintain a strong wilderness coordination function at the national and support center levels as appropriate, through the restructuring and streamlining process.
- Initiate periodic wilderness message to Congress. Develop the means to communicate both the strengths and weaknesses of NPS wilderness management efforts.
- Highlight the policy and responsibility for managing areas under study or recommendation for wilderness as wilderness until Congressional decisions are completed.

### Conveying the Wilderness Message/Developing Partnerships

The NPS needs to develop and communicate the compelling message of wilderness and its value to America for visitors, staff, and outreach efforts. The story of wilderness is the story of America, an increasingly rare resource which serves as our link to the natural and cultural past. Wilderness is critical to the preservation of biodiversity, healthy ecosystems, and areas sacred to Native Americans, as well as providing a major recreation resource for current and future generations of citizens.

Wilderness management is an area in which the NPS must reach out and forge partnerships with wilderness-related industry, wilderness educators, environmental non-profit and non-governmental organizations, and the rapidly urbanizing and ethnically diverse population of the United States. Public participation will be essential in the success of management of wilderness as we enter the 21st century.

To this end, the Task Force recommends that the NPS:

- Develop a compelling message of wilderness for use within and external to the organization, including NPS marketing efforts, the Vail Agenda, and so forth.
- Initiate actions to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the passage of the Wilderness Act, including joint programs with the National Geographic Society and other land management agencies.
- Participate in the Interagency "Leave No Trace" Program and use it as a vehicle for forging new partnerships with industry and other user groups.



### Investing in NPS Employees

In the long run, investing in wilderness management training for NPS employees will pay tremendous dividends in terms of improved wilderness management. The Task Force recommends that the NPS:

- Actively participate in the interagency Arthur Carhart Wilderness Training Center.
- Establish interdisciplinary wilderness management as a top Service training priority beginning in fiscal year 1995.
- Fund, through the fiscal year 1996 budget or by reprogramming, a Cooperative Park Education Unit (CPEU) dedicated to interagency, interdisciplinary wilderness education needs, and to supporting on-going training efforts (Leave No Trace, Wilderness Correspondence Course, Wilderness Cultural Resource Management Training).

### Improving Wilderness Planning

To provide for improvement and consistency in wilderness management, priority must be given to improving NPS wilderness planning. The Task Force recommends that the NPS:

- Establish a Servicewide priority to complete Wilderness Management Plans by the year 2000.
- Develop Wilderness Management Policy and Planning Guidelines in fiscal year 1995 and complete a review of existing policies related to wilderness management.
- Fund, through the fiscal year 1996 budget or by reprogramming, establishment of interdisciplinary Wilderness Resource Teams (WRT's) to assist parks in development of their Wilderness Management Plans.
- Recognize that at all levels of planning, areas under study or recommendation for wilderness must be planned as wilderness.

### Improving Resource Management and Understanding

Wilderness is a fundamental building-block for ecosystem management regimes and bio-regional protection. It provides a benchmark for measuring the effects of global and regional changes on the natural environment, and of human adaption to those changing environments. It protects areas important to traditional Native American religious values. This relationship between wilderness and larger ecosystems needs to be recognized both by the NPS and external constituencies. For the purpose of improving wilderness resource management and understanding, the Task Force recommends that the NPS:



- Support the interagency Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute and ensure that it provides support to field units; use the NPS restructuring process to provide the necessary level of NPS support for this purpose.
- Request National Biological Survey support for the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute.
- Recognize wilderness as a component of visitor and resource management in the NPS. Use Resource Management Plans (RMP's) as the vehicle to communicate wilderness needs.
- Ensure that wilderness is considered in Servicewide and Support Center funding programs and priorities.

### Unjamming the Backlogged Wilderness Designation Process

NPS wilderness studies and recommendations for many parks, required by the 1964 Wilderness Act remain in limbo either in Congress or remain uncompleted to this day. The Task Force concludes that the backlogged wilderness designation process needs to be brought to closure. For this purpose, it is recommended that the NPS:

- Develop an Administration rationale and strategy that will prompt Congress to complete action on existing NPS wilderness recommendations.
- Establish an NPS planning priority to complete NEPA, NHPA and AIRFA compliance on wilderness studies so they can be forwarded to Congress.
- Establish the designation of NPS wilderness as a major administration legislative initiative in 1995.



## INTRODUCTION

### Identity Crisis to Stewardship

The attitudes of Euro-americans towards wilderness have undergone a remarkable transition since 1492. European settlers to the "New World" shared the long Western tradition of regarding wilderness as an obstacle to personal survival, an "enemy" to be "conquered".- A "hideous and desolate wilderness" is how William Bradford of the *Mayflower* described the immense wilderness of the North American continent in 1620. In contrast, native American Indians viewed all the earth and its resources as something to be cared for, and to be used for survival--a view now gaining acceptance more than 100 years after the closing of the American frontier. Legislative milestones illustrating this evolving public opinion include the establishment of Yellowstone, the world's first national park, in 1872, creation of the NPS in 1916, passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964, and a variety of historic and cultural resource preservation statutes.

It is not surprising that the U.S. Congress, at the strong urging of the American public, created a National Wilderness Preservation System, to provide an unprecedented level of protection for selected public lands managed by the four federal land management agencies, including the NPS. Congress defined wilderness in these precisely crafted words:

*A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.*

*An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements of human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. (Wilderness Act of 1964, 16 USC 1131-1136).*

That Congress has felt compelled to designate NPS lands as wilderness should be seen as more than just a warning against overdevelopment of these wildlands. Congress intended these lands to be managed as wilderness. Despite the competing demands on our dwindling natural resources which have compelled us to continually weigh the benefits of wilderness preservation against the costs of alternative management options, wilderness designation and protection has only grown. Today, nearly one-half (48%) of all NPS lands are designated as wilderness, including 39.1 million acres in 42 units, while nearly another 8 million acres is under study or already recommended to Congress for wilderness designation.



History has shown that human values associated with preserved natural environments are linked to the extent of modification in surrounding developed landscapes; the inexorable growth of civilization means that wilderness values are likely to continue to grow and expand—as will the challenges to effective wilderness management.

If the "Old Frontier" was marked by a need to tame wilderness, today's "New Frontier" is marked by a need to tame civilization in order to preserve the last island remnants of wilderness. The pervasiveness of human influence (development) now precludes our ability to manage entire natural ecosystems, at least in the lower 48 states. The threats to these resources are both internal and external to wilderness boundaries. Visitors unintentionally trample vegetation, erode soil, and disturb wildlife. Activities outside wilderness pollute air and water, introduce exotic species, and provide barriers to the natural movement of flora and fauna. These threats are numerous, pervasive, and virtually intractable.

The benefits of wilderness include experiential, scientific, and symbolic or spiritual values. A number of noted American writers, including Emerson, Thoreau, Muir, and Leopold have extolled the experiential values of wilderness. These writers argue that the wilderness experience provides a "re-creational" outlet to counteract the tension and stress of modern civilization, fostering personal growth, leadership development, and environmental education. Some also assert that the wilderness experience was a prominent factor in forming our national character, part of what makes Americans unique. Many wilderness areas protect the evidence of human use over the past 14,000 years. Thus, wilderness has incalculable scientific value by serving as an essential source of information about relatively naturally functioning ecosystems and how people have altered natural systems. The prehistoric and historic archeological and architectural/engineering sites remnant within these protected areas, often accompanied by detailed paleo-environmental records, are an invaluable key to understanding ecosystem changes over time. Wilderness environments provide reservoirs of genetic diversity that we are only now beginning to appreciate or use. Finally, wilderness symbolizes stability and simplicity in a world characterized by rapid change and complexity, and protects the locations of Native American sacred sites. The existence of wilderness reflects self-imposed limits on the historically assumed technological imperative to subdue the earth.

It will take much more effective and sensitive management to capture and maintain the benefits of wilderness for the American public. Effective wilderness management integrates an understanding of natural and cultural ecology with human needs and activities. The long term preservation of wilderness requires more than the legal protection of a designated tract of land. It requires knowledge of the past and present structural and compositional characteristics and the physical and biological processes characterizing the area in question, as well as an understanding of the role of the area and its attributes in a regional setting. Such ecological drivers must then be integrated with an understanding of the human dimension; the benefits derived and values placed on such areas by local and distant populations.





In summary, the success of our wilderness management efforts depends on how clearly we understand the range of natural and socio-cultural wilderness values, how effectively we protect them, and how we make them available to the American public. The relatively new science of *ecosystem management* provides an exciting opportunity for managing wilderness based on maintaining the integrity of the functional attributes of entire "ecological systems". This approach, which is based on ecological principles, recognizes that ecosystems are dynamic in space and time and that natural disturbance is a key element in determining local ecosystem attributes. Ecosystems have both natural and socio-cultural components. Their dynamic interaction must be valued and, where feasible, managed. Ecosystem management focuses on managing for long term sustainability of entire ecosystems by emphasizing functional processes rather than the maximization of one or more species or characteristics. It also recognizes that human influences are pervasive and ubiquitous; they do not stop at wilderness boundaries and can only be expected to place increasing pressure on efforts to manage wilderness as a "natural" entity reflecting relatively minimal adverse impacts on non-human ecosystem components. Ecosystem management de-emphasizes the importance that political or administrative boundaries have in land use decisions. Finally, ecosystem management must be adaptable; it must be able to incorporate new knowledge as goals and understanding change.

Wilderness is at the core of larger ecosystems and at the heart of the NPS. Improving wilderness management is a vital part of managing parks in the ecosystem context. The Wilderness Task Force believes that adoption of its recommendations can contribute in a meaningful way to the future of land management in the National Park System.



## **WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT AND THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

Wilderness in the National Park Service has suffered from a crisis of identity. As the concept of wilderness evolved and as wilderness areas have been established by Congress, the NPS, has failed to respond with a collective vision or defined understanding of wilderness management. While one former Regional Director called wilderness, "the very best of the very best"<sup>1</sup>, others, during the passage of the Wilderness Act fought adamantly against it. There remains no consistent distinction between wilderness management and backcountry management. Wilderness is often judged as just one of the many elements in the mission of the NPS.

The misunderstanding continues; but an analysis of what the Wilderness Act has accomplished with reference to the National Park System provides the ultimate reminder of the relationship between wilderness and the NPS's uncompromising stewardship responsibility to future generations.<sup>2</sup>

### Uncertain Traditions and Trends

The Wilderness Act originated out of a national concern over trends affecting roadless areas on the national forests. But it was also applied to lands in the National Park System because of concerns about the erosion of roadless blocks within units of the National Park System. The Wilderness Act basically was a zoning system to establish that certain blocks of land within units of the system would be maintained permanently as wildlands free of roads, resorts, or other significant man-made intrusions.

Neither early traditions nor later trends provided clear expectations about the future disposition of roadless lands within the system. No one disputed the authority of the NPS to maintain roadless areas if it chose, but history showed that such was not always its choice. Understandably, the public favoring preservation grew distrustful of NPS commitment toward protecting wild places.

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<sup>1</sup> Contor, Roger. *A Vision for Wilderness in the National Parks*, University of Idaho's Wilderness Resource Distinguished Lectureship Series, December 3, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Contributions to this section by Michael McClosky (Sierra Club), Frank Buono (Albright Training Center), and Jonathan Jarvis (CRMO) are acknowledged.



The early history of the classic national parks reveals a persistent and disturbing trend towards making them more accessible and more comfortable. Yosemite came to the NPS with roads and resorts in Yosemite Valley, and Yellowstone soon came with them in its heartland. By the 1920s, Stephen Mather came to recognize that parts of the Yellowstone country "should be maintained as a wilderness"<sup>3</sup> and that in Yosemite, park management policy ought to leave "large areas of high mountain country wholly undeveloped."<sup>4</sup> These statements were a reaction to an unfolding history of developing parks. There was nothing in the early history of managing parks to suggest that wilderness would have a secure place. Indeed, Secretary Lane's early letter of guidance to park managers emphasized providing "public access by all means practicable."<sup>5</sup>

The whole history of changing patterns of transportation access shows the mounting pressure on wilderness.<sup>6</sup> Only small numbers of people were brought by stage coach. Soon thereafter, more were brought by railroads, but most of the lines ended near park boundaries; there were no deep intrusions into wilderness. However, the automobile changed all of that. Roads were pushed into places railroads never penetrated. When wagon roads were built as highways, they fed a spreading system of roadways. Mather's promotion of roads in the 1920s unleashed forces that changed the face of the park system.

Concerns about road building intensified in the 1930s as the NPS undertook the job of building parkways. While these were mainly in the east, some saw this as the wave of the future throughout the country. The Civilian Conservation Corps also was actively involved in building within parks too, although some felt there were too many projects in too many places. Patterns of resort development were particularly common in state parks. The spread of rustic chalets created a sense that these belonged everywhere.<sup>7</sup> They began to appear in the backcountry in Yosemite, Sequoia, and Glacier National Parks.

Ironically, it was in the 1930s that the idea of establishing parks with wilderness character was introduced. Because of competition with the Forest Service and anxieties of the outdoor groups and dude ranchers, Interior Secretary Ickes worked to make sure that many new parks established then would be permanently managed, for the most part, as wilderness. These new "wilderness" parks included Everglades, Kings Canyon, Olympic, and Isle Royale. Sometimes the wilderness mandate was included within authorizing statutes.<sup>8</sup> However, these

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<sup>3</sup> See Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience* (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1979), p.122.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.123.

<sup>5</sup> See John Hendee, George Stankey, and Robert Lucas, *Wilderness Management*. (Forest Service, 1982), p.32.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.167-68.

<sup>7</sup> For discussion of the revolt against resorts, see Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (3rd ed.) (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1982), p.326.

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, Hendee et al, *Wilderness Management* p. 32; also Runte, *op. cit.*, p.142.



wilderness commitments were limited to those specific parks, stemming from their legislative histories. Other parks established during the same period, such as Big Bend, did not include any commitment to wilderness.

In the 1950s, interest revived in building programs in parks using the "Mission 66" program. For over a decade, the drumbeat of development was heard in most parks, with new visitor centers, parking lots, and improvements appearing ubiquitously. During George Hartzog's tenure, proposals were broached to build tramways to various high points, including Yosemite Valley and in the North Cascades. A controversial drive-up lookout was built in Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and a struggle ensued over a proposal to build a new highway across the mountains within that park. The NPS lost support for managing the Oregon Dunes area because of its advocacy for providing vehicle access to the beach. Later controversies developed over the use of motors on watercraft running rivers through parks. Motorized watercraft in the Grand Canyon represent the most controversial of these issues, with tensions among users that continue today.

During the 1950s and 1960s, more anxiety arose over the permanence of wilderness within the national parks. This anxiety arose from proposals to build dams within various units of the system: Dinosaur, Rainbow Bridge, and Grand Canyon. In two out of the three cases, conservationists defeated the proposals. While this concern was not targeting the NPS's use of discretion, it reinforced the belief that the nation needed to re-double its commitment to protecting nature within parks.

#### Legal Mandates and Practice

The 1916 Organic Act provides no clear guidance on the question of how wilderness should be managed and protected. The scenic, natural, and historic objects of the parks must be conserved while providing the public enjoyment by means that will leave them unimpaired for the future.<sup>9</sup> This mandate has been administratively interpreted as giving the NPS discretion to determine how to strike the balance between maintaining wilderness and providing facilities that were accessible by popular means of transport. Limits were perceived on NPS discretion only to the extent that non-conforming developments, such as a dam at Hetch Hetchy, could not be authorized, while roads, resorts, campgrounds, and amusements were left to the agency's discretion (though obviously extremes in development would do violence to the Organic Act's mandate).

By the 1930s some felt that more legal guidance concerning the protection of wilderness resources was needed. In 1939 legislation was introduced to authorize the President to declare wilderness areas in national parks and monuments.<sup>10</sup> Robert Marshall, founder of the

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<sup>9</sup> 16 U.S.C. sec. 1.

<sup>10</sup> See James Glover, *A Wilderness Original: The Life of Bob Marshall* (The Mountaineers, Seattle, 1986), p.254.



Wilderness Society, backed this bill. Although it did not pass, it set in motion efforts that eventually culminated with passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 (16 U.S.C. sec. 1131 et seq.): While the Wilderness Act was designed primarily to address conditions within the National Forests, the Act clearly contemplated its application to the National Park System. Sections 3(c) and (d) and 4(a) apply specifically to the Secretary of Interior and the National Park System. Section 4(a)(3) makes it clear that designation of units in the National Park System as wilderness "shall in no manner lower the standards evolved for the use and preservation" of these units under various laws. The purpose of this language was to ensure that the NPS would not need to lower its standards relative to the special provisions/compromises that were applicable only to National Forest wilderness areas. Wilderness areas within the NPS are to be managed at the very highest possible standard afforded by U.S. law when they are managed under the protection of both the Organic and Wilderness Acts. NPS management of a wilderness to meet only the intent of the Organic Act falls short of meeting the legislative intent of the Wilderness Act. In an opinion of February 24, 1967, the Department of Interior Solicitor wrote that "...it is obvious that Congress could only have intended by the Wilderness Act that wilderness designation of National Park System lands should, if anything, result in a higher, rather than a lower, standard of unimpaired preservation."<sup>11</sup>

In general, designation of wilderness zones (section 4(c)) within park units has the following legal effects on administrative discretion available under the 1916 Organic Act:

- no permanent roads are allowed (subject to certain exceptions to meet minimum requirements for wilderness administration, to deal with emergencies, and involving vested private rights);
- no commercial enterprise is allowed (subject to the same exceptions as stated above); however, commercial services (e.g. guide services) can be permitted to the extent necessary for realizing purposes of wilderness recreation (sec. 4(d)(6));
- no temporary road is allowed (not subject to the above exceptions, nor are the following restrictions subject to them);
- generally, with exceptions authorized for emergency or minimal administrative needs, no use can be made of motor vehicles or motorized equipment or motorboats (the pre-existing use exception for the Forest Service does not apply to the Dept of Interior units);
- generally, with exceptions authorized for emergency or minimal administrative needs, aircraft are not permitted to land within such areas;

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<sup>11</sup> Opinion M-36702 (74 I.D. Nos. 4 & 5).



- no other form of mechanical transport is allowed (e.g. wagons, bicycles, etc.);
- generally, with exceptions authorized for scientific or administrative purposes, no structures or installations can be maintained within such areas (tradition does allow trails, footbridges, and slight campsite improvements for backpackers). Historic structures often remain in wilderness guided by a variety of preservation statutes.

Contrast with the Organic Act: Under the Organic Act, almost all of the above cited activities can be permitted in some form within park units. While commercial exploitation of natural resources would not be allowed, commercial services which depend upon these resources are provided by concessionaires. Both permanent and temporary roads are maintained, as well as structures and installations of various sorts (e.g., campground facilities), and use by various types of motor vehicles is allowed in selected places. While development of the South Rim of the Grand Canyon and Yosemite Valley may be compatible with the NPS Organic Act, this type of development is not compatible with the Wilderness Act.

The Organic Act gives the NPS discretion to find a balance between use and preservation, while the Wilderness Act explicitly limits this kind of discretion. Consider that the 1972 Master Plan for the North Cascades National Park called for a series of trams from the state highway into the pristine subalpine alpine zones of the park. It also called for a new road to the head of Ross Lake and downhill ski areas in the Ross Lake NRA. These remained as official NPS proposals until the 1988 Washington Parks Wilderness Act designated wilderness in the park and adjacent recreation areas, eliminating all possibility of these developments. Accordingly the Wilderness Act serves both as a commitment to maintain wilderness and a legal restriction against permitting debarred activities and developments.

Empowering Provisions: The Wilderness Act also makes the administering agency responsible for maintaining the wilderness character of the area designated as wilderness (sec. 4(b)). Under this provision, the NPS may also acquire additional authority to deal with non-conforming uses within units where all commercial uses have not been extinguished statutorily. For instance, wilderness designation by Congress may override further dispensations for grazing within a given park, if it is discretionary and no private right has vested. Interestingly enough, the special provisions of the Act governing inholdings do not apply to the Secretary of the Interior. Most of the Act's exceptions for continued commercial use and development also do not apply. For the NPS, wilderness designation empowers the Secretary of Interior to protect wilderness from impacts associated with inholdings, commercial use, and development.

Special Provisions: Although the 1988 National Park Service Management Policies do provide some guidance on wilderness, many issues remain unaddressed. For example, it is not entirely clear as to whether the Wilderness Act restricts various kinds of management practices, such as predator control, fish planting, and elimination of exotic species. The obligation imposed by Sec. 4(b) to maintain wilderness character might rule out the first two, but not the last. Moreover, section 4(d)(1) does authorize the Secretary of Interior to undertake necessary measures within wilderness areas to control fire, insects and disease. The degree to which such measures are constrained by the word "necessary" is probably subject to legal debate, although



there is some expansion of the term by the Endangered American Wilderness Act of 1977, and by the cultural resource management provisions of the Central Idaho Wilderness Act of 1980 and the El Malpais Legislation (P.L. 100-225) and accompanying Congressional reports.

Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA): Passage of ANILCA in 1980 more than quintupled the wilderness acreage managed by the NPS. Along with the eight new NPS wilderness areas came over 20 modifications to the Wilderness Act for Alaska wilderness management. Some of the more obvious modifications include allowing motorized access (motorboats, snowmachines, and airplanes) for recreation; subsistence activities including hunting, fishing, trapping, and the gathering of firewood and house logs by local, rural residents; sport hunting in preserve units; temporary structures for taking of fish and wildlife (preserves only); provision for reasonable access across wilderness to private and state land including mining claims; and provisions for air and water navigation aids, communications sites, and facilities for weather, climate and fisheries research and monitoring. Care must be taken to understand how these modifications came into being and that they apply only to wilderness in Alaska; further guidance may be needed in NPS Management Policies.

### Administrative History

The NPS is perceived by many as being unenthusiastic about having the Wilderness Act apply to national parks. Following the passage of the Wilderness Act, the conservation community perceived the NPS as slow in pursuing studies and making wilderness recommendations. This perception stemmed from a belief that the NPS limited the size of blocks recommended for wilderness (e.g. see recommendations for Canyonlands and Capital Reef). Often zones recommended were set back considerable distances from roads and developed areas. Wilderness advocates tended to believe that wilderness boundaries should be set close to such developments to assure that roads and developments would not spread in the future. These groups also opposed excising areas subject to non-conforming uses, such as backcountry chalets or areas burdened with problems such as power lines (they suggested the concept of "escrow wilderness" to avoid going back to Congress when the non-conforming developments were removed). Both the NPS and the Forest Service also tended early to advance notions of "wilderness purity" to limit the size of areas recommended as wilderness. Wilderness advocates again disagreed. Congress agreed with wilderness advocates; subsequent law and administrative history bear witness to this. This history casts light on the role that the Wilderness Act plays in limiting administrative discretion and future development options in park units.

The issue of "wilderness purity" became a focus of Congressional attention in 1972 when Senator Frank Church, who was the floor manager during Senate consideration of the Wilderness Act, chaired a Senate oversight hearing reviewing agency implementation of the Wilderness Act. That hearing was highly critical of the land managing agencies' arbitrary use of "purity" to deny wilderness designation for substantial acreage. The Department of the Interior responded with Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks issuing clear new direction for wilderness planning that eliminated the use of buffer strips and enclaves.



Subsequent Congressional action further clarified these issues with the passage of wilderness areas that included clear legislative history concerning wilderness standards. The Eastern Wilderness Act and designation of wilderness in Shennandoah National Park included lands that had previously be subject to extensive forest cutting, some agricultural use, and development, thus establishing that wilderness values could be restored to the landscape. Designation of wilderness in Sequoia-Kings Canyon and Yosemite National Parks clearly established that the existence of administrative facilities such as weather stations and snow measuring devices did not preclude wilderness designation. At Isle Royale National Park, the Congress recognized that the existing backcountry shelter system was appropriate within the wilderness while the Olympic National Park Wilderness included several historic shelters and other structures. The Congress also consistently redrew agency wilderness recommendations to extend wilderness boundaries close to roads and park boundaries, thus clearly signaling that wilderness may be located within the sights and sounds of developed areas. The use of "potential wilderness additions" also became the accepted practice, thus giving authority to the Secretary to designate wilderness on specific areas once an existing nonconforming use was removed.

1978 Amendment to the Organic Act: In 1978, in connection with the expansion of Redwood National Park, Congress amended the NPS Organic Act to add section 1a-1 to the Act. The new language, in essence, provides that management of the various areas of the National Park System *"shall be conducted in light of the high public value and integrity of the National Park System and shall not be exercised in derogation of the values and purposes for which these areas have been established, except as may have been or shall be directly and specifically provided by Congress."*<sup>12</sup>

Courts have since construed this amendment as giving the NPS a stronger mandate to protect parks (see *Sierra Club v. Andrus* and *National Rifle Association (NRA) v. Potter*).<sup>13</sup> However, these cases did not really turn on the kinds of questions which arise with the application of the Wilderness Act. The Sierra Club case dealt with the Secretary's duty to protect Grand Canyon National Park by securing it from external threats which might deplete its water supply. The amendment itself arose in connection with a similar problem, protection of Redwood National Park from external threats to park resources. The NRA case affirmed the authority of the Secretary to disallow hunting and trapping within units of the National Park System. None of these cases, however, really deal with the issue of whether the Secretary is obliged, under the amended Organic Act, to disallow roads, resorts, and campgrounds.

Moreover, the legislative history of this amendment also reveals that it was designed to deal with another kind of problem. As an outgrowth of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission in the 1960s, the NPS had adopted the practice of classifying units of its system as

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<sup>12</sup> Public Law 95-250, Title 1, sec. 101(b), 92 Stat.166 (March 27, 1978).

<sup>13</sup> *Sierra Club v. Andrus*, 487 F. Supp. 443, 448 (D.D.C. 1980); *National Rifle Association v. Potter*, 628 F. Supp. 903 (D.D.C. 1985).





either natural, recreation, or historical units. Once it did that, units tended to be managed more in terms of regulations developed for those kinds of units than to reflect their own statutes. There is reason to believe that the 1978 amendment to the Organic Act was intended to put an end to that practice, and indeed these regulations were dropped soon thereafter.<sup>14</sup> The Service was told to look to the values and purposes for which the various areas were established, and not to use authority under the Organic Act to administer them in a different way. For instance, national seashores should be seen as having important natural values that should be conserved rather than simply be viewed as areas to be developed for mass recreation with little emphasis on conservation. But this change of emphasis does not go so far as to remove discretion to build some roads and structures for public enjoyment. Only the Wilderness Act removes this discretion and establishes a mandate for preservation.

### Opportunities

The NPS should make the most of the fact that it manages statutory wilderness. Wilderness designation represents a national affirmation of the importance of the wilderness values of these lands--that they are the very best of the very best. These lands are part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. These lands are also related to an emerging world system of wilderness areas. The NPS should be proud to show visitors that it can offer them wilderness which is legally protected in perpetuity. This may surprise some visitors to areas such as Point Reyes or the North Cascades who may view these areas for what they really are: the best remaining examples of an untrammelled natural world.

The NPS should view the term "wilderness" in a positive light. Wilderness evokes connections with a large and powerful literature, which can excite the imagination of users. By contrast "backcountry" is a less evocative term which merely suggests it is back (away) from development and is perhaps even deficient in points of interest. The NPS can use its positive association with wilderness to build stronger ties with groups who can be supportive of park purposes.

Seeing wilderness in park as part of a larger wilderness system should also encourage cooperation with other land management agencies administering adjacent wilderness areas. A block of wilderness straddling agency boundaries should be managed in a coordinated fashion and be seen positively as a resource. The Wilderness Act's emphasis on pro-active management should encourage this approach.

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<sup>14</sup>

See 51 Federal Register 21840-1 for actions removing the contrary regulations.



## Conclusion

The Wilderness Act supplements the NPS's basic statutory authority, just as the World Heritage Convention's application does. The Wilderness Act also adds greater affirmation of the importance of keeping parts of park units in an undeveloped condition. It serves as a permanent zoning device, with national legal sanction, determining where roads and structures will not intrude. Parks with statutory wilderness are insulated from local political and internal pressures to extend roads inappropriately into wildlands. The NPS must build the preservation of natural and cultural wilderness values into planning and management. Once Congress finally designates wilderness, a great element of uncertainty is removed from the planning process. Wilderness management is the highest form of stewardship we can offer.



## THE 1993 WILDERNESS TASK FORCE

Several field groups and interagency advisory groups, including the 1986 Wilderness Task Force and a 1989 Wilderness Workshop, have provided recommendations on how to improve wilderness management in the NPS. The NPS response to these field advisory group recommendations has been ineffective at best. Past agency leadership has not met its responsibilities in wilderness management. Congressional action has threatened to address this failure.<sup>15</sup> Opportunities to garner positive public acclaim have been missed.

As a result of this situation, Director Kennedy, within a few months of confirmation, requested the formation of a field Task Force to develop recommendations for improving the wilderness management in the National Park System that would be consistent with the other goals of the Administration (e.g., Vail Agenda, Ranger Futures, Reinventing Government, and NPS Restructuring Plans). A Task Directive was developed and 24 representatives (see Acknowledgements) from many disciplines and organizational entities from across the NPS assembled in Washington, D.C. for the first five days of November, 1993, to develop these recommendations.

After hearing from a variety of speakers from within and outside the NPS, the Task Force, through a facilitated session, developed the six sets of objectives with respect to improving wilderness management in the NPS and assigned critical actions to realize the objectives. The specific areas discussed are:

- Wilderness Leadership
- Conveying/Marketing the Wilderness Message
- Wilderness Training and Education
- Wilderness Planning
- Wilderness Resource Management and Understanding
- Wilderness Designation Process

The most important missing ingredient in improving NPS wilderness management was thought to be strong and consistent wilderness leadership. Readers of this Report are encouraged to browse through the appendices as the information they contain is important to understanding how recommendations were developed.

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<sup>15</sup> Reference H.R. 4326, 102d Congress, a bill to "improve the wilderness management and wilderness research programs of the National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management in the Department of Interior.



## **WILDERNESS TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS: Objectives for Improving Wilderness Management**

### **Wilderness Leadership**

The Task Force recommends immediate action to achieve the following objectives toward improving wilderness leadership within the agency:

- Define and communicate internally and externally a strong and distinctive vision for NPS wilderness stewardship.
- Define and establish agency organizational structures that foster effective wilderness stewardship at all levels of the organization. This includes: (1) A National Wilderness Steering Committee that reports to the Deputy Director, (2) similar Wilderness Steering Committees at the System Support Center level similar to Pacific Northwest Region's Wilderness Coordination Council, and (3) designation of the line officer in each park to be responsible and accountable for management of each designated wilderness, recommended wilderness area, or wilderness study area.
- Seek out, recognize, publicize, and award significant accomplishments in wilderness stewardship within the National Park System by employees, volunteers, and others.
- Increase interagency cooperation in the management of the wilderness resource and promote interagency leadership. Recognize NPS wilderness as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System.
- Initiate periodic wilderness message to Congress. Develop the means to communicate both the strengths and weaknesses of NPS wilderness management efforts.
- Highlight the policy and management responsibility for managing areas under study or recommendation for wilderness as wilderness until Congressional decisions are completed.
- Address the "consistency" issue through NPS policy development.

### **Conveying/Marketing the Wilderness Message**

The Task Force then felt that it was essential to begin to communicate the importance of wilderness and wilderness management responsibilities. Action is recommended on the following objectives:



- Develop and convey a compelling story of wilderness in the National Park System to the public, the story of a nation shaped by wilderness and the transition from conquering a wilderness continent to protecting the last vestiges of natural ecosystems.
- Communicate wilderness management responsibilities, including a clear explanation of the differences between the NPS Organic Act and the Wilderness Act, to field personnel. This must identify and emphasize the significance of wilderness within the National Park and National Wilderness Preservation Systems. NPS interpretive divisions at all levels of the agency need to be involved in this effort.
- Utilize the 30th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act to increase internal and external awareness and preservation of wilderness in the National Park System.
- Develop a long-term, professional marketing plan to promote wilderness stewardship and management to protect wilderness values in national parks.

### **Wilderness Training And Education**

Programmatically, the Task Force felt that the most important need was to provide training for line officers and staff with wilderness management responsibilities. Virtually every discipline within the agency has a role in wilderness management, but there is no source of training on the subject available to any of them. Action is recommended on the following objectives:

- Make wilderness management training an agency-wide training priority beginning in fiscal year 1995.
- Develop a wilderness training plan with the goal of fostering wilderness responsibilities agency-wide and developing the appropriate knowledge, skills, and abilities to carry wilderness management forward.
- Identify and insert a wilderness component into existing training courses within the NPS, a section on wilderness awareness, values, management, and responsibilities.
- Participate in the interagency Arthur Carhart Interagency Wilderness Training Center and provide support consistent with making interagency training courses and materials useful for NPS needs. Provide for NPS participation in the "National Advanced Wilderness Management Training for Line Officers" currently offered by the Training Center.
- Provide wilderness training for line officers, park and system support center coordinators, and other employees with wilderness responsibilities. To the extent possible, make these interagency training opportunities.



## **Wilderness Planning**

NPS guidance for planning and managing wilderness is weak or lacking; it must be an important priority. Action is recommended on the following objectives:

- Develop separate wilderness planning and management guidelines that include standardized components and format, as well as key policies and concepts (e.g. minimum requirement).
- Develop a Wilderness Resource Team concept with the resources necessary to facilitate the development of wilderness and backcountry plans across the agency in a reasonable time frame.
- Make completion of wilderness/backcountry plans an NPS planning priority and develop a plan to complete these by the year 2000.
- Require that at all levels of planning, areas under study or recommendation for wilderness be planned as wilderness, until Congressional dictates otherwise.

## **Wilderness Resource Management and Understanding**

In the long term, significant improvements in wilderness management are most likely if progress is made in our understanding of wilderness resources and resource management. To facilitate that, action on the following objectives is recommended:

- Participate in the Interagency Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute and provide support sufficient to ensure that the Institute can address critical research and resource management needs of NPS wilderness areas.
- Build consensus within the NPS for the importance of wilderness research and monitoring for resource management decision making and for understanding impacts on the world environment.
- Recommend to the National Biological Survey that they assist progress on the wilderness research and resource management agenda of the NPS and its sister land management agencies by supporting the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute.
- Cooperate and assist in needed wilderness-related research and resource management and in technology transfer capability in partnership with the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute and the other land management agencies.
- Have wilderness recognized as a resource to be considered in resource management decision-making.



## Wilderness Designation Process

The backlog in the wilderness designation process for the NPS was recognized, and the Task Force recommends action on the following objective:

- Assess the status of the NPS wilderness designation process; develop a recommendation on how the NPS should proceed with respect to the backlog in the NPS wilderness designation process.
- Establish the designation of NPS wilderness as a major administration legislative initiative in 1995.



## WILDERNESS TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS: Critical Actions and Organizational Responsibilities

The following is a listing of the critical actions and organizational responsibilities essential for achieving the foregoing objectives:

### ACTIONS TO IMPROVE WILDERNESS LEADERSHIP

The following actions or tasks must be completed by the designated organizations if NPS Wilderness Leadership is to be improved:

#	Action or Task	Responsibility	Target Date
1.	Set up a National Wilderness Steering Committee (NWSC) to provide the Directorate with thorough information on NPS wilderness management needs. Evaluate wilderness program leadership infrastructure at all levels of the agency in conjunction with the first meeting of the NWSC in the new fiscal year.	(Deputy Director/ Ranger Activities)	FY 1995
2.	Analyze and report on the status of wilderness management using a new Annual Report to Congress Format and PNRO's "Fully Functional Format". Highlight field accomplishments as well as needs that should be addressed by the Directorate. Adapt for interagency use if possible.	(Ranger Activities/ Steering Committee)	On-Going
3.	Field Directors will evaluate wilderness program leadership infrastructure (See Restructuring NPS Wilderness Leadership) and then inaugurate support center wilderness steering committees appropriate to their needs. (To be completed only after streamlining decisions affecting regional offices are accomplished).	(Field Directors/ Directorate)	FY 1995





#	Action or Task (continued)	Responsibility	Target Date
4.	Superintendents with designated/recommended/study wilderness evaluate wilderness leadership for their parks and identify 1) how they will provide wilderness leadership across staff divisions and districts, and 2) who is the line officer responsible and accountable for accomplishing this task. Add wilderness management into performance standards. (See Restructuring NPS Wilderness Leadership)	(Superintendents/ Field Directors)	FY 1995
5.	Director to propose the establishment of a formal Interagency Wilderness Coordination Council and/or joint coordinator position (consider jointly funding) to the heads of other land management agencies. (To be completed in conjunction with streamlining plans).	(Director)	FY 1995
6.	Initiate a Wilderness Awards Program to reward distinguished accomplishments in wilderness management in the NPS.	(Ranger Activities/ Task Force)	On-Going
7.	Provide recommendations to ASD-Management on how to address Wilderness in Operations Evaluations, follow-up with Deputy Director.	(Ranger Activities)	On-Going
8.	Budget Formulation Staff will make wilderness more visible in the NPS Budget and determine if any accomplishment tracking is possible.	(Budget Office, Formulation Branch)	FY 1995
9.	As streamlining is completed in WASO and Regional Offices, strong leadership is recommended (1 FTE) in National level, and in other System Support Offices where there is significant wilderness/backcountry acreage (e.g., Alaska, Pacific/Great Basin, Columbia Cascades, Rocky Mountain, Colorado Plateau, and Desert Southwest).	(Deputy Director, Ranger Activities)	FY 1995



#	Action or Task (continued)	Responsibility	Target Date
11.	Clarify management responsibility to manage wilderness study areas and areas recommended for wilderness designation as wilderness. Memorandum from Director to all Field Directors and superintendents.	(Director)	FY 1995
12.	Request Secretary to initiate periodic wilderness message to Congress	(Director)	FY 1995

#### ACTIONS TO CONVEY AN NPS WILDERNESS MESSAGE/FORM PARTNERSHIPS

The following actions or tasks must be completed by the designated organizations if improvements in conveying/marketing wilderness are to occur:

#	Action or Task	Responsibility	Target Date
1.	Develop a marketing plan and vision statement to convey the compelling message of wilderness both within and outside the NPS.	(Task Force)	FY 1994
2.	Put "Wilderness" in NPS marketing efforts.	(Loren Frazer)	On-going
3.	Incorporate Task Force Recommendations into Vail Agenda where appropriate.	(Rick Smith, SWRO (or replacement)	On-going
4.	Initiate actions for the 30th anniversary celebration of the Wilderness Act. NPS and interagency approaches to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Do Challenge Cost-Share Proposal: National Geographic Education Program's Summer Institute on Wilderness Provide for full NPS input.</li> </ul>	(Ranger Activities/ Interp. Division)	Done



#	Action or Task (continued)	Responsibility	Target Date
	b) Do Challenge Cost-Share Proposal: National Geographic's Geography Awareness Week: Development of compelling message and educational materials for use by National Geographic and NPS.	(Ranger Activities/ Interp. Division)	On-Going
	c) Sponsor Sixth Interagency Wilderness Conference. (Assistant Secretary, FWP to speak)	(Ranger Activities/ WRO/SWRO/PNRO)	On-Going
	d) All-employee letter from Director commemorating 30th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act and importance of wilderness in the NPS.	(Ranger Activities)	9/94
	f) Explore additional possibilities (CNN, Discovery Channel, Smithsonian Institution) for productions on wilderness.	(WRO: Schmierer)	FY 1995
5.	Develop relationships or partnerships with:		
	a) National Park Foundation for Leave No Trace training, material, and message.	(Ranger Activities)	On-Going
	b) National Park Foundation for sponsoring Wilderness Correspondence Course.	(Arthur Carhart Wilderness Training Center)	On-Going
	c) National Outdoor Leadership School and others for low-impact video for mountain parks.	(Ranger Activities)	On-Going
	d) Leave No Trace Members Organization (ORCA, SGMA, L.L. Bean, etc) for development of LNT materials.	(Ranger Activities)	On-Going



#	Action or Task (continued)	Responsibility	Target Date
	e) Wilderness Education Association (WEA) and others to produce public service announcements on Wilderness and minimum impact ethic.	(Unassigned)	FY 1995
	f) America Outdoors and the outfitter and guide community to produce low impact materials.	(Unassigned)	FY 1995
6.	Actively participate in the Leave No Trace Steering Committee and attend requisite meetings and related activities.	(Ranger Activities/ Interpretation/Field	On-Going

#### **ACTIONS TO IMPROVE NPS WILDERNESS TRAINING AND EDUCATION: Investing in NPS Employees**

The following actions or tasks must be completed by the designated organizations if improvements in wilderness training and education are to occur:

#	Action or Task	Responsibility	Target Date
1.	Assign 1 FTE to work with and serve as liaison to the Arthur Carhart Wilderness Training Center and Albright Training Center to provide for NPS wilderness training and interagency coordination.	(Director/ Deputy Director)	FY 1995
2..	Establish wilderness training as a top training priority in FY 1995. Ensure NPS participation in National Advanced Wilderness Management Training for Line Officers. Provide for staff training as well; seek to make training interagency whenever possible.	(Director/ASD - Ed. & Visitor Services/ Employee Dev.)	FY 1995
3.	Incorporate funding request in FY 1996 budget or reprogram for Wilderness Correspondence Course and the LNT Masters Course so that all staff with wilderness responsibilities will have access to this training.	(Deputy Director/ Budget Officer)	FY 1995



#	Action or Task (continued)	Responsibility	Target Date
4.	Ensure that a section on wilderness is incorporated into relevant existing NPS training courses: e.g. Ranger Skills course, Fundamentals for Natural Resource Professions, and later add to maintenance, interpretation, and cultural resources.	(Deputy Director/ Employee Dev)	FY 1995
5.	Sign interagency agreement joining the NPS to the interagency Wilderness Training and Research Facilities. Announce to field.	(Director/ Ranger Activities)	On-Going
6.	Work with Interagency Wilderness Training Center to evaluate and develop recommendations for making the Line Officer Training Course fully applicable and valuable to NPS line officers. Evaluate the Center's materials for use by NPS and the need for NPS employee at the Training Center.	(Ranger Activities/ASD- Resource Stewardship Force)	Done
7.	Request funding/reprogramming for a Cooperative Park Education Unit (CPEU)/Interpretive Specialist dedicated to wilderness.	(Director/Deputy Director/ASD Ed & Visitor Services)	FY 1995

#### ACTIONS TO IMPROVE NPS WILDERNESS PLANNING

The following actions or tasks must be completed by the designated organizations if improvements in NPS wilderness planning are to occur:

#	Action or Task	Responsibility	Target Date
1.	Provide for NPS participation in development of interagency Wilderness Planning Training Module.	(Ranger Activities/ field nominees/DSC)	On-Going



#	Action or Task (continued)	Responsibility	Target Date
2.	Task field work group to develop NPS Wilderness Management Guidelines in 1995 with support from Ranger Activities.	(Field Work Group/ NWSC)	FY 1995
3.	Request funding/reprogram so that the National Wilderness Steering Committee (NWSC) can create Wilderness Resource Teams (WRT's) to assist the parks in development of their Wilderness Management Plans.	(Director/ Deputy Director)	FY 1995
4.	Set priority to ensure that Wilderness Management Plans are completed by the year 2000; add to line officer performance standards.	(Director/ Deputy Director)	FY 1995
5.	Address "consistency" issue. Complete review of adequacy of existing wilderness policies and make recommendations for inclusion of any additions in NPS Management Policies and guidelines. (Issues include, educational use of wilderness and difference between wilderness and backcountry).	(Destry Jarvis/ Policy Office/ Jim Walters, SWRO)	FY 1995
6.	Ensure that all planning for wilderness study areas and areas recommended to Congress for wilderness are planned as wilderness.	(ASD, Prof. Services)	FY 1995

#### **ACTIONS TO IMPROVE NPS WILDERNESS RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND UNDERSTANDING**

The following actions or tasks must be completed by the designated organizations if improvements in wilderness resource management and understanding are to occur:

#	Action or Task	Responsibility	Target Date
1.	Support the interagency Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute; provide support/reprogram funds sufficient to identify and assist NPS research and resource management problem-solving and aid technology transfer.	(Director/ Deputy Director)	FY 1995



#	Action or Task (continued)	Responsibility	Target Date
2.	Land Management Agency Directors recommend/request National Biological Survey (NBS) to support the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute (WRI). Letter should recommend that NBS recognize the unique opportunities wilderness presents to learn about natural ecosystems, their role in regional resource issues, and long term ecosystem sustainability. Also request that NBS establish a dedicated wilderness research program, including staff and project support through WRI. If unfunded by NBS, request part of these funds through FY 1996 budget.	(Director/ASD-Resource Stewardship/Ranger Activities)	On-Going
3.	Have wilderness recognized as a resource and use Resource Management Plans as appropriate vehicle for identifying, describing, and requesting all wilderness management, I&M, resource management, and social science research needs.	(Deputy Director/ASD-Resource Stewardship)	FY 1995
4.	Ensure that wilderness boundaries are included in GIS Map layer for parks, and wilderness boundaries are on park maps.	(ASD-Res. Stewardship/ASD-Ed & Vis Serv)	FY 1995
5.	Ensure that in all NPS service-wide funding sources:		
	a) RFP's state that proposals for inventory and monitoring or research studies in Wilderness are welcome, and give priority to any proposal which address wilderness needs when competing proposals are equivalent in all other factors.	(ASD-Res.Stewardship/Deputy Director)	FY 1995
	b) Using Pacific Northwest Region as a model, identify wilderness as a resource within the full range of resources and give wilderness equal access to regional resource management funds.	(ASD-Res. Stewardship/Deputy Director)	FY 1995



#	Action or Task (continued)	Responsibility	Target Date
	c) Research in wilderness is appropriate (i.e. it does not require use of mechanized equipment for support, permanent construction or installations, motorized equipment for comfort of personnel, and actions do not leave temporary or permanent alteration to the wilderness resource).	(ASD-Res. Stewardship/ Deputy Director)	FY 1995

### ACTIONS TO ADDRESS BACKLOGGED DESIGNATION PROCESS

The following task must be completed by the designated organizations if the problem of the backlogged designation process is to be improved:

#	Action or Task	Responsibility	Target Date
1.	Prepare a status report on NPS Wilderness Designation Process; provide recommendations on how to proceed and complete this process in the NPS.	(Env. Quality Div.)	Done
2.	Director to request Secretary to make the designation of NPS Wilderness a major administration initiative in 1995.	(Director)	FY 1995





## RESTRUCTURING NPS WILDERNESS LEADERSHIP

Providing leadership was identified by the Task Force as one of the principle keys to improving NPS wilderness management. This will be even more critical as the NPS moves into streamlining and restructuring in the coming year. Without leadership in this situation, the recommendations of the Task Force may be no more effective than past recommendations. The following is the detailed recommendation on how leadership can be provided to wilderness management at the National, Regional, and Park Level through restructuring, streamlining, and beyond. It provides for a strong coordination function and identification of line responsibility at each level of the new NPS organization. It address diversity for wilderness, perhaps more than other resources, must incorporate the diversity of personnel involved in wilderness management. And it provides for effective communication between the different levels of the organization, an essential if progress in implementing the recommendations of the Task Force is to be sustained. And finally, it provides for vital interagency connections that need to be maintained into the future. Putting emphasis on more interagency connection, coordination, training, and resource management will be essential because of limited resources available.

### Providing National Wilderness Leadership

The Task Force recommended that wilderness leadership be provided in two ways at the national level: through the maintenance of a strong wilderness coordination function and the establishment of a National Wilderness Steering Committee. The recommended approach to providing these functions in the context of proposed restructuring and streamlining is detailed in the following sections.

#### National-level Wilderness Coordination

As the proposed restructuring of the NPS identifies a major downsizing of the Washington Office, national level leadership for wilderness should be provided through the Field Operations Support Technical Center and be co-located with the Natural Resource Center in Fort Collins, Colorado (See Figure 1). It is recommended that an office be established at this national center that would encompass the following functions at a minimum:

- Interagency Wilderness Coordination
- Wilderness Coordination and Support/Annual Report to Congress
- Identification of systemwide program needs and program development
- Overflight Issues & Training: Liaison to Federal Aviation Administration
- Overflight Issues & Training: Liaison to Department of Defense
- Steering Committee for Interagency Training & Research Facilities:  
Identification of training, research, and resource management needs
- Wilderness/Backcountry Training
- Wilderness/Backcountry Planning Support
- Development of Partnerships with conservation and recreation communities
- Support for Interagency "Leave No Trace" program efforts
- Liaison to National and International Wilderness Conferences & Workshops



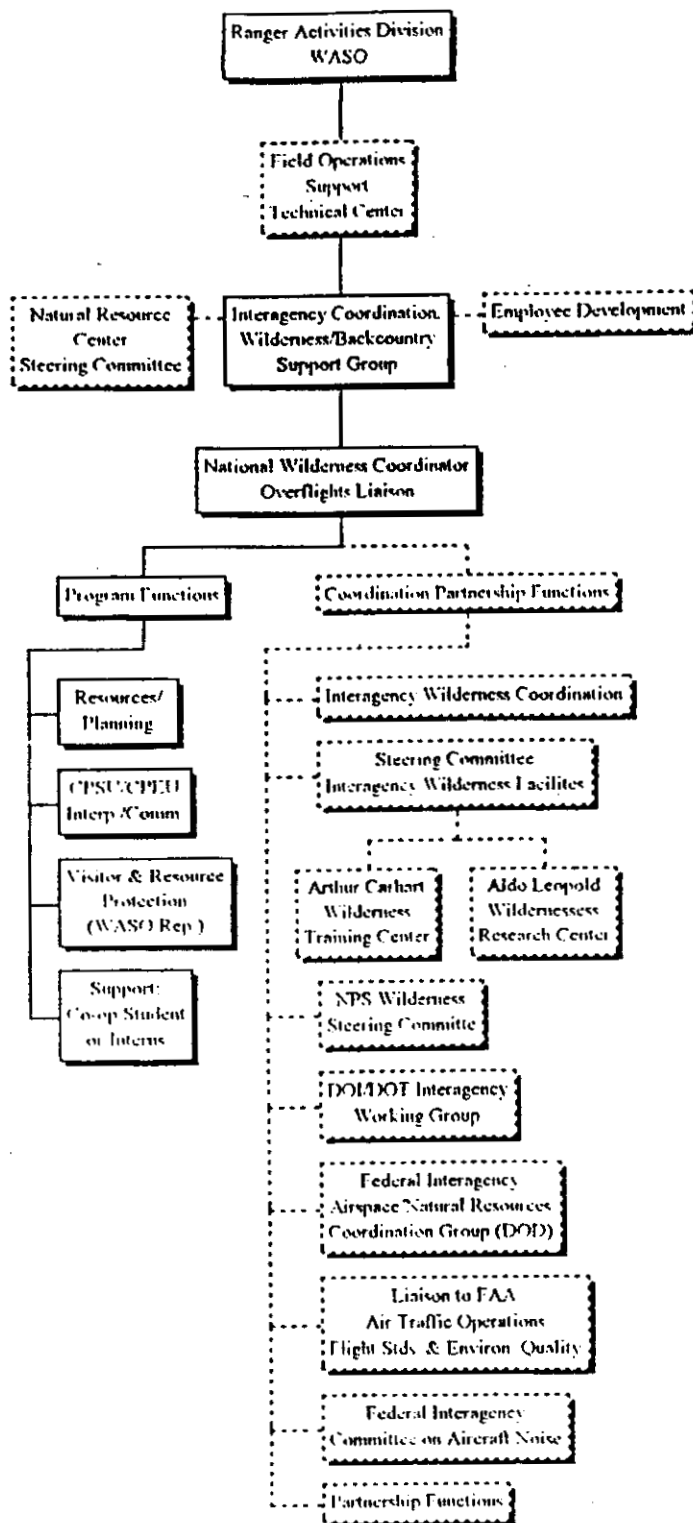


Figure 1: Restructuring NPS Wilderness Leadership



FTE and funding consistent with the recommendations of this Task Force would comprise this office. And consistent with the multi-disciplinary nature of wilderness management in the NPS, it is desirable to have operational, resource management, and interpretive types of staff represented in this group. Strong linkages will also be needed with Employee Development since all of these individuals will need to be involved in training.

### National Wilderness Steering Committee

The establishment and operation of a National Wilderness Steering Committee (NWSC), shown in Figure 1, is also a vital component of national leadership which provides the vehicle for making visible field expertise and needs to steer the program. The Task Force recommends the following structure and function for this Steering Committee.

#### Chair:

Deputy Director

Staff Work provided by the National Wilderness Coordinator

#### Membership:

- (1) National Wilderness Coordinator
- (2-3) Support Unit-Wilderness Specialists or Others
- (2-3) Rangers/Natural or Cultural Resource Management Specialists
- (1) Maintenance Specialist
- (1) Interpretive Specialist
- (1-2) Social Science/Compliance
- (1-2) At large (Alaska, etc.)

#### Term:

Three year non-concurrent terms

#### Function:

Annual meeting each fall to assess progress in wilderness management program and to make recommendations to the Directorate on program direction and needs for the coming year. A 1-2 day meeting of the membership would occur first to discuss program progress and based on input from the membership, the annual wilderness report to Congress, and Regional/Support Unit wilderness specialists, an annual program plan will be developed for the coming year. This will be followed by a meeting with the Deputy Director and appropriate national level staff. The National Wilderness Steering Committee will also have the responsibility to review and edit the findings of the Annual Report to Congress on Wilderness Management which will be the reporting document from the parks to assess program progress. The survey for the Annual Report to Congress on Wilderness Management would provide a major communication tool for the Steering Committee.



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